

# Equity Theory

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**Abstract:** This paper is about how equity theory is very important to our life. Without it we cannot continue our relationship and life with others. Most people do not understand the concept of equity theory, and that why their relationship with others did not last. In this paper, I apply equity theory to two Scenarios and the results were when people treat their partners or others with fair and impartial, they will be happy and satisfied. However, when people give too much in the relationship and receive a little or nothing in return, they would feel unsatisfied and unhappy, and the relationship cannot last.

**Keywords:** Continue our relationship, Equity in Marriage.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Equity is the quality of being impartial and fair. In our daily relationship we as humans we try to achieve equity subconsciously or even knowingly. The notion and perception or restoring balance in the relationship is what drives most of the people to strive for harmony. People say that love is the thing that keep a relationship healthy and going, but this is not true or neither realistic. Some marriages have a lot of love but at the end of the day they do not last. An explanation to this can come from equity theory of communication that says, individuals or persons in relationships are much satisfied with a relationship where there is equal to offer or give in both sides and parties. Why does some relationship work or it is successful while others are unsuccessful? Why do some individuals divorce or break up soon after getting into a relationship? In this research paper, I am going to use Equity theory of communication to answer the above question and also use this theory to analyze why various relationship fail while others are successful.

## 2. EQUITY THEORY

Equity theory was first developed in the year 1960 by a psychologist by the name John Stacy, who affirmed that workers or employees try to maintain equity between what they offer or put into a job and what they get or receive from it against the inputs and outputs of other people. Equity theory proposes that human beings love and appreciate fair treatment, this motivates them to maintain and treat others the way they are treated. Stacy based equity theory on the work place where he said that equity in the workplace is based on employee contribution regarding their work to the company and the company outcomes regarding salaries and rewards. Basing this theory in the relationships, it proposes that individuals in a relationship who feel that they are putting a lot effort and sacrifices to keep the relationship running will experience emotional anger and also distress. Also this theory propose that individuals that are in a relationship who feel that are getting more or less than what they have given or offered to the other partner will be guilty and some who are offering more than they receive they will feel that they are being used in that relationship, and that may lead to end the relationship (Disley, Hatton & Dagnan, 2009).

Equity theory is based on people beliefs that they deserve a fair treatment, and every person has his or her own perception and notion about fairness In a love relationship between a couple, when one individual puts in sacrifice, effort and time into it he/she expects the other partner to do the same. If a one individual feel or get a perception he/she is putting a lot of effort, sacrifice and time than his/her partner he /she is likely to pull aside leading the relationship to stop. For example, Mary and Johnson have been in a relationship for two years. Mary is working in a restaurant, and still she attends classes in the evening. So her time is very limited but despite this she goes to see Johnson at his working place when she breaks for lunch or tea. All goes well for some time until Johnson tells her not to come at his office, Mary feels bad, and she is distressed. She feels that she was sacrificing herself and putting a lot of effort to make the relationship work, but her partner Johnson is putting the same work. After a month, Mary decides to breakup with Johnson. This is what equity is all

about. If Johnson would have made the same effort the relationship would be healthy and still running (Cardwell & Flanagan, 2003).

### 3. SOME STUDIES HAVE USED EQUITY THEORY

Equity theory has been applied in a study that involves working with individual intellectual disabilities by Disley, Hatton, and Dagnan. Equity theory is a concept that focuses on the employees. It was founded by John S. Adams and relates to employees focusing on the effort they put into work in relation to the outcome they receive from this effort. In relation to this, when employees have a feeling that the input and outcome levels match, you can tell from the way they carry out their day to day activities, and also you can tell from their stress level (Disley, Hatton & Dagnan, 2009).

Another study has used equity theory is equity theory to students' perception of research participant requirements by Miles, Cromer, and Narayan. It has to do with students and how they feel more valuable carrying out researches and how it made them perform better haven known that they participated in the research. This can also be related to employees in the workplace and how they work better when they have a say on matters that concern them (Miles, Cromer, & Narayan, 2015).

### 4. SCENARIOS

#### **Scenario 1. A couple living in my neighborhood who got divorced:**

There was a couple in my neighborhood that got divorced a year ago. The Man was working as an accountant in a very reputable company in back home (Saudi Arabia). The woman was working as a teacher. From the sources, the relationship was stable and running well. The problems started when the husband was fired due to some missing money in the firm. He started looking for new job in order to make some income. The children needed school fees and food. The man used his savings to keep the children in school and to pay the bills. After a couple of the account was empty. The husband was stressed and depressed that he could get a job and his family needed money to pay the bills. The husband started to drink a lot and started doing drugs because of stress. He started coming home late and sometimes he will not even show up. On the another hand, the wife became the breadwinner of the family providing food for the children. The money was not enough so she decided to take two jobs at the same time to afford paying the bills. After confronting his husband regarding his behaviors, he decided to change. He started to work as a cashier in a store dealing with Households. But the pay was little compared to the wife. The wife advised him to take another job so that he can get another income to support the family, but the man declined. The woman continued to work on in the two jobs one in the morning and another in the evening while the man only worked for a few hours. After a couple of months, I heard from the neighborhood that the couple got divorced.

#### **Scenario 2. My neighbor who his family is ever happy and people around always talk about them and praise them:**

I admire my neighbor. Mr. and Mrs. Saeed that's not there name, but I will use it to hide their identity for confidentiality purposes. The family is happy always. I have observed the family for a couple of months. Their son happens to be my friend, so it gave me a good chance to know well about them. Mr. and Mrs. Saeed were both working. Mr. Saeed was a businessman, and her wife was a teacher. They had four children, two young one and two who were in college. Both the couple was busy and sometimes the husband would have some business trips and would leave his wife to take care of the home. Mrs. Saeed would go for a job during the weekends and will leave the husband to take care of the house even during the trips that she had with the school that would last for a couple of days.

The couple had a good salary, and they would both contribute to settling the bills and school fees for their children. The husband would take the children out and also the wife in return the wife would do the same. Sometime, I would find the husband preparing dinner for the family while the wife would be doing dishes it was inspiring the way the couple lived and helped each other. Because the children were attending a different school, the wife would drop one child to school, and the other would be dropped by the father. Sometimes the children would be picked by their mother and sometime they would be picked by their father. It was such a wonderful family and everybody did admire it.

#### **Applying Equity theory to the first scenario:**

According to the Equity theory, people are happy and satisfied with the relationships where both the partners give and take. That is they give something to the relationship, and they expect to be given back something in return. On short there

is give and take in that relationship. If one partner is offering or giving too much to the relationship and he or she is receiving little or nothing in return would feel unsatisfied and would be unhappy with the relationship. Also, the partner who is receiving a big share from the other partner would feel guilty that is being offered much and in return he or she offers little or nothing at all. In this case the man and woman were living happily before because the husband and the wife were offering both into the relationship. Although the husband was the one offering a lot in the relationship, paying bills school fees for the children and another bill the relationship was stable and both were happy.

When the husband was fired, and the money in the account run out, the woman took all the responsibility of the house. Taking care of the children and paying the bills. She even took a second job to cater for all the bills. After the man was confronted by the wife he got a job but it was not paying well. The wife advised the husband to take a second job for them to be able to take care of all the bills by the man refused. This is where equity theory comes in; the woman felt that she was offering and giving a lot into the marriage in form of catering for the bill, and she felt unhappy and she was used by the husband. She felt that she was contributing a lot to the relationship than the husband who was not even willing to sacrifice. She felt that the relationship could not go on like that, and she was unhappy and stressed that why they had to divorce or end the relationship (Sanderson, 2003).

#### **Applying Equity theory to the second scenario:**

Equity theory proposes that partner motivation to continue and stay in a love relationship is based on equality of the contributions made by both the partners. If both the partners are equally contributing or giving out equally to the relationship, it will be happy, and the relationship will continue or go on as both feel satisfied. In this case, Mr. and Mrs. Saeed are contributing almost equally to the relationship. Both share and pay the bills when the Mrs. Saeed takes them out the next time Mr. Saeed takes them out. They would both share the responsibility of taking and picking their children from school. When the wife was busy, the husband would take care of the home and the children. The same case happened when the husband was busy. When the wife was washing dishes, the man was preparing dinner. They were both contributing to the relationship.

The family was happy, and people in the neighborhood praised it because they were happy ever. This can be explained using the equity theory of relationship. When there is a contribution by both partners, the relationship will be happy, and there is motivation to continue with the relationship. As both the partners are satisfied, and they feel what they offer into the relationship, they get it back from the other partner. That why Mr. and Mrs. Saeed family are happy and the relationship is healthy (Sanderson, 2003, p. 465).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

A good marriage or relationship is formed on the basis of equality. That is the input and also the outcomes. And this is what makes a relationship healthy and going. For a relationship to work both the partner should sacrifice their time money and other things into their relationship. When a husband is contributing to the relationship and the same to the wife the family will be happy, and the partners will be satisfied with the relation, and it will keep on going. Equity theory explains why some relationship works and another fail as shown above. For a couple to be happy in their relationship or marriage, they should try and apply this theory.

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